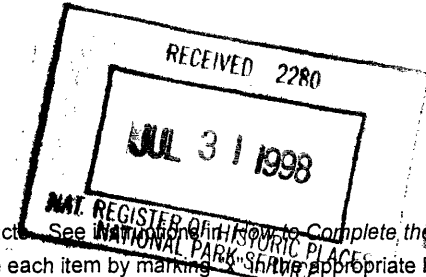


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. *See NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES* to complete the *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for 'not applicable'. For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instruction. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: Joseph T. Adams House  
other names/site number: Tax #1-35-19.08 163

2. Location

street and number: 12 East Pine Street N/A not for publication  
city or town: Georgetown N/A vicinity  
state: Delaware county: Sussex County 605 zip code: 19947

3. State/Federal/Tribal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Daniel W. Griffith, State Historic Preservation Officer* *June 18, 1998*  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau American Indian Tribe

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau American Indian Tribe

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other. (explain:)

*Edson F. Beall* Signature of the Keeper Date of Action *8-28-98*

**5. Classification****Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed****in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade  
 Domestic

**Historic Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Professional  
 Single Dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade  
 Vacant/Not In Use

**Current Subfunctions**

(Enter subcategories from instructions)

Professional

**7. Description****Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival  
 Greek Revival  
 Italianate

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation      Brick  
 Walls              Shake  
 Roof                Asphalt

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7. DescriptionPage 8Joseph T. Adams House  
Sussex County, Delaware**Narrative Description**

The Joseph T. Adams House stands on a formerly residential street that has transformed into the civic and legal center of Georgetown, the county seat of Sussex County, Delaware. The Adams House sits directly across from the Sussex County Courthouse, and the Sussex County Administration Building. It is a two-story wooden shingle building with a gable roof, cross-gable dormer, eave returns, and a small porch. The house itself consists of a mid nineteenth century five bay, two story structure that is one room deep with a center hall and staircase, and a one story rear ell. The exterior of the Adams house has a Greek Revival form, with return eaves that are typical for this style, while much of the exterior detailing, including the prominent cornice, is Italianate. Some later alterations to the Adams House, including the front porch, are Colonial Revival in style. The Joseph T. Adams House retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The building sits on its original lot, although the lot has been subdivided and transferred, and despite the later alterations to the building the detailing and craftsmanship have survived unaltered. The later alterations to the house have not detracted from the building's significance or the aesthetic value of the property. The property has recently been rehabilitated for use as an office, but with limited impact to the historic fabric of the building.

The window openings are symmetrically arranged across the front facade of the Joseph T. Adams House. The windows are six-over-six double-hung sash with ornamental lintels. The sash in the attic of the Adams house are three light, fixed wooden units, while the front dormer window features an arched Italianate window that is missing its mullions. The lintels are a character defining feature of the exterior of the Adams House. They feature a small flat pediment, with a small cornice detailing. The windows feature standard slotted shutters. However, ornate hardware for earlier shutters remains in situ.

The Adams House features corner columns on all elevations and an elaborate Italianate cornice. The corner columns consist of flat wooden trim and have a small classical order at the point where the columns join the cornice. The cornice is used on both the north and the south elevations, and wraps onto the east and west elevations to form the return eaves. The cornice has elaborately detailed ogee-shaped brackets that feature an Italianate scroll motif on the surface.

The cross gable dormer of the Adams House features an arched top window, a triangular pedimented window lintel, and ornate scaled shingles. These shingles have a rounded exposed edge. The porch of the Adams House, a later addition, has a small gable roof, and simple columns, resting upon a brick deck and stair construction. The original porch of the Adams House was a full facade structure, approximately 6' x 19' (Kent County Mutual Insurance Company policy of 1873). Both the cross gable dormer and the extant porch appear to be additions from the Colonial Revival era.

The close spacing of the windows in the attic end walls indicates that the chimneys were interior. Within the attic, the chimneys remain, and are located at the end walls. At some point, the chimneys were demolished above the roof line, and the roof patched over the former openings.

The rear ell of the Adams House has a modified shed roof, a small simple brick chimney, and a later concrete block chimney. There are two single light fixed sash windows on the East elevation, and one six over six double hung wooden sash on the south elevation.

The interior of the Joseph T. Adams House features a simple room arrangement, consisting of a central hall and stair passage, and one room off either side of the hallway. The stairway is rather simple with two short runs, an intermediate landing, paneled walls, a railing that features a simple oval rail stock with a raised ridge, and tapered spindles with decorative turnings.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7. Description (continued) Page 9

---

Joseph T. Adams House  
Sussex County, Delaware

The doors of the Adams House have six fielded panels with an arrangement featuring three different sizes of inset panels. The two smallest panels are on the top, with the largest in the middle of the door, and the intermediate size panels on the bottom. The door surrounds are classically inspired with fluted detailing and projecting round ridges. The interior window casings have a similar trim design scheme.

The two parlor rooms on the first floor feature a simple flat baseboard with  $\frac{3}{4}$  round-over detail, a chair rail and a cornice that also displays the round-over motif. Overall the interior finish of the Joseph T. Adams House is rather simple, and typical for a well-finished house in Sussex County during the period of its construction. The original plaster walls are intact throughout the house. Several ceilings in the Adams House have been treated with a suspended ceiling material.

The room on the west of the hall passage features decorative moldings on the wall surfaces, above the level of the chair rail, intended to simulate wooden paneling. The mantle consists of flat columns that meet a cove detail which supports a flat horizontal surface.

Upstairs, the Adams House is identical in room configuration and interior finish as the first floor, with the exception that the rear ell is only a story-and-a-half structure, and is not accessed from the second floor of the main block. At the top of the stair landing is a small bathroom, a later addition.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is

- A owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes..
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1868-1919

Significant Dates

Circa 1868

Significant Person

(Complete if criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

## Narrative Statement of Significance

The Joseph T. Adams House, at 12 East Pine Street, in Georgetown, Georgetown Hundred, Sussex County, Delaware is a c. 1868, frame dwelling being nominated under National Register Criterion C for its architectural significance at the local level. The Adams House is illustrative of the shift from the Greek Revival to Italianate architectural styling, with limited later Colonial Revival alterations. The Joseph T. Adams House retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The environs of the Adams House has changed since the construction, from a residential area to the seat of judicial and political power for Sussex County. Later alterations to the Joseph T. Adams House have been minimal, and retain their own significance.

Joseph T. Adams was born on November 21, 1831 in Sussex County, Delaware. His parents were Isaac and Margaret Adams, of Georgetown, Delaware. There is no indication in available records of specifically where Mr. Adams was born, or his education. At the time of the 1850 US Census Joseph Adams was living with his parents in Georgetown and was employed as a clerk. At the next Census in 1860, Mr. Adams was 28 years old and married to Jane Adams, also 28. The Adams' had two children; Horace, then age four, and William, age two. Horace Adams appears only sporadically in the records concerning the family, while his brother appears frequently. This may be an indication that Horace either did not own significant holdings, or moved away from Sussex County. Joseph Adams was still employed as a clerk in 1860, and held seven hundred dollars in assessed real estate and two hundred fifty dollars in personal holdings.

The land on Pine Street on which Joseph T. Adams would construct his home, was purchased by a family member, Jacob Adams as an original lot of the subdivision of Georgetown, Delaware in October of 1793 (attached). Jacob Adams is likely the grandfather of Joseph T. Adams, although no definitive record of this relationship exists. Apparently there was a previous residence constructed to the rear of the property prior to Joseph Adams building his home in approximately 1868. In the 1850 US Census and the 1868 Sussex County assessment records, Joseph Adams is assessed for seven hundred dollars for a lot and house. In the 1872 Sussex County assessment, Mr. Adams is assessed fifteen hundred dollars for a lot and house. In 1873 Mr. Adams took out a policy for fire insurance with the Kent County Mutual Insurance Company for ". . . a new two story frame dwelling, 18x38 with a front porch attached 6x19. Also a back building 14x21 with porch attached 8x21. Finished with seven rooms (the main house presumably) and two halls or passages, warmed with stoves with pipes well secured in Brick Flues, pump in the yard, nearest dwelling 30 foot distant, owned and occupied by applicant, Situated on Pine Street in Georgetown" The policy also mentions a frame well house and smokehouse, 10x20, about 15 feet from the main house. The policy covers "a Lot of household furniture in the above described buildings consisting of beds, steeds and furnishings, chairs, sofa . . . drapes, stoves, tables, carpets, etc."

The Joseph T. Adams House appears on the 1868 Beer's Atlas of the State of Delaware. For these reasons the date of construction for the house can be narrowed to c. 1868. Mr. Adams built his home shortly after the 1868 assessment, but before the 1868 Beer's Atlas.

According to an amendment to the 1873 Kent County Mutual Insurance Company policy, in 1874 a permit was issued to build an office, within 10 feet of the Adams House. This office first appears on the 1880-1884 Sussex County Assessment, and appears on the 1885 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Georgetown, Delaware. In 1880 the policy is again amended to reflect a "permit for a Summer Kitchen attached to Back Building, flue from ground." The insurance records are very useful in looking at the progression of the Adams House, and of the property. From the insurance policy of 1873, it is apparent that the current front porch, which features Colonial Revival detailing, is a replacement of the original porch, described as ". . . front porch attached 6x19". The current porch is significantly smaller. Also, the insurance policy mentions a back building on the property. This parcel of land was originally two separate lots, and a previous dwelling could have existed to the rear of the property.

Joseph Adams' assessment in Georgetown Hundred more than doubled between 1868 and 1872, further narrowing the construction date of the house. The assessment of Joseph T. Adams' lot, house, and later office stayed at a consistent level of between \$1300 and \$1500 between 1873 and his death in 1905, at the age of 73. The office is last mentioned in the assessment of the property in the 1896-1900 assessment.

Mr. Adams was alderman of the Town of Georgetown from 1873 through 1876. This was an elected position with a one year term. He was also a director of the Georgetown Building and Loan Association, and a Trustee of the Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Adams was a Justice of the Peace, elected on January 9, 1871, the same year he was a Notary Public for Sussex County. Joseph Adams was elected to the office of Prothonotary of Sussex County in 1882 & 1887 (Scharf, Page 1210).

After Joseph Adams' death the house passed to Jane Adams, his wife (Sussex County Recorder of Wills, Book 19, Page 111-113). Mr. Adams left a nephew a sum of money, and left the rest of his real property to his wife, which would pass to his

son, William D. Adams at the time of her death. There is no mention in Joseph Adams' will of his son Horace. In 1880 Horace was living in another property his father owned, just south of Georgetown (Kent County Mutual Insurance Company policy, 1880). It seems likely that Horace passed away before his father.

Jane Adams continued to live in the house until her death on December 2, 1914. The property was transferred to her son William. The assessment records from this time indicate that William Adams owned another lot & house, of a slightly higher value, also in Georgetown Hundred.

On December 15, 1919, William D. Adams sold 12 East Pine Street to Clara R. Short (Sussex County Recorder of Deeds, book 218, page 184) for \$2,500. On August 9, 1923, Clara Short sold the property to Josiah S. Wilson for \$3,000 (Sussex County Recorder of Deeds, Book 242, page 103). In February of 1935 the property was taken from Josiah Wilson under a Writ of Levari Facias at the suit of the Farmers Bank of the State of Delaware for \$3,824.27. On February 8, 1935, the property was sold at Sheriff's Sale to the Farmer's Bank for \$1,500 (Sussex County Recorder of Deeds, Book 297, page 413).

The Farmer's Bank of the State of Delaware held the property for several years, although no record of its use or inhabitants could be located. On March 6, 1945, the Farmer's Bank sold the Adams House to Estella P. Gyles, a widow, for \$2,300. Mrs. Gyles owned the house, and apparently maintained her primary residence there, until she sold the property to the Town of Georgetown on November 12, 1957 for \$12,000.

The Joseph T. Adams House the first permanent home for town offices in Georgetown's history. It also housed Town Council chambers. Georgetown was commissioned through a 1791 Act of Legislature, and was managed by commissioners appointed by the General Assembly, including Rhoads Shankland the original surveyor of Georgetown. In 1851, home rule was established for Georgetown, with commissioners elected for one year terms. The Commissioners had no permanent home at the time. In 1942, the town adopted a system of mayor and council for representation.

On April 9, 1968, the Town sold the property to the Hebron Projects Company, of Hebron, Md. for \$18,000. On November 10, 1972, the Hebron Projects Company sold the property to the Herring Creek Company of Georgetown for \$17,500. In 1975 the current owner, Mr. Karl Haller, purchased the property.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9. Major Bibliographical References

Page 10

---

Joseph T. Adams House  
Sussex County, Delaware

**Bibliography**

Sussex County Deeds:

William D. Adams to Clara R. Short (December 15, 1919), Book 218, Page 184  
Clara R. Short, et al to Josiah S. Wilson (August 9, 1923), Book 242, Page 103  
Martin D. Carey, Sheriff to Farmers Bank of the State of DE (February 8, 1935), Book 297, Page 413  
The Farmer's Bank of the State of Delaware to Estella P. Gyles (March 6, 1945), Book 352, Page 230  
Estella P. Gyles to the Town Council of Georgetown (November 12, 1957), Book 481, Page 273  
The Town Council of Georgetown to Hebron Projects Company (April 9, 1968), Book 629, Page 522  
Hebron Projects Company to the Herring Creek Company (November 10, 1972), Book 692, Page 412

Sussex County Wills:

Joseph T. Adams Will, Sussex County Recorder of Wills, Book 19, Page 111-113

Maps and Atlases:

Beers, D. G. Atlas of the State of Delaware. Philadelphia: Pomeroy and Beers, 1868.

Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, Ltd.,

Printed Sources:

Georgetown Historical Society ed., From Crossroads to County Seat, a Bicentennial Look at Georgetown, Delaware, Rogers Graphics, Inc., Georgetown, DE, 1992



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10. Geographical Data

Page 11

---

Joseph T. Adams House  
Sussex County, Delaware

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the point in the southeasterly right of way of Pine Street which point is approximately 120 feet North 53 25' E. from a point marked by the intersection of the southeasterly boundary of Pine Street and the northwesterly right of way line of South Bedford Street, which point is a corner for Lot #114; thence S. 36 30' E. For a distance of 37.2 feet to a point inside the line of a cyclone fence; thence with the line of the said fence N. 53 25' E. For a distance of 60 feet to a point in the line of Lot #117; thence with the line of said lands n. 36 30' W. For a distance of 37.2 feet to a point; thence by and with the said right of way line of Pine Street S. 53 25' W. For a distance of 60 feet, together with improvements thereon.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The portion of land that is being nominated along with the Joseph T. Adams house is the remaining portion of Jacob Adams' original purchase of land from Rhoads Shankland, surveyor. This original parcel was identical in frontage along Pine Street to the current property, although the parcel extended back to Harris Alley.

---

**11. Form Prepared By**

---

name/title: Mark G. Rayburn, former Historic Preservation Planner  
organization: Sussex County Historic Preservation Planner  
street & number: 2 The Circle, P.O. Box 589  
city or town: Georgetown state: Delaware

date: 6/15/1997  
telephone: (302) 855-7719  
zip code: 19947-

---

**Additional Documentation**

---

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

---

**Property Owner**

---

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name: Karl Haller  
street & number: P.O. Box 533 telephone:  
city or town: Georgetown state: Delaware zip code: 19947-

---

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.* ).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget. Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS:)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- See continuation sheet for additional HABS/HAER documentation.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- 
- 
- Local Government (Repository Name: Sussex County Recorder of Deeds)
- 
- Other (Repository Name: Delaware Public Archives)

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property:** 1.00

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	466587	4282389	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

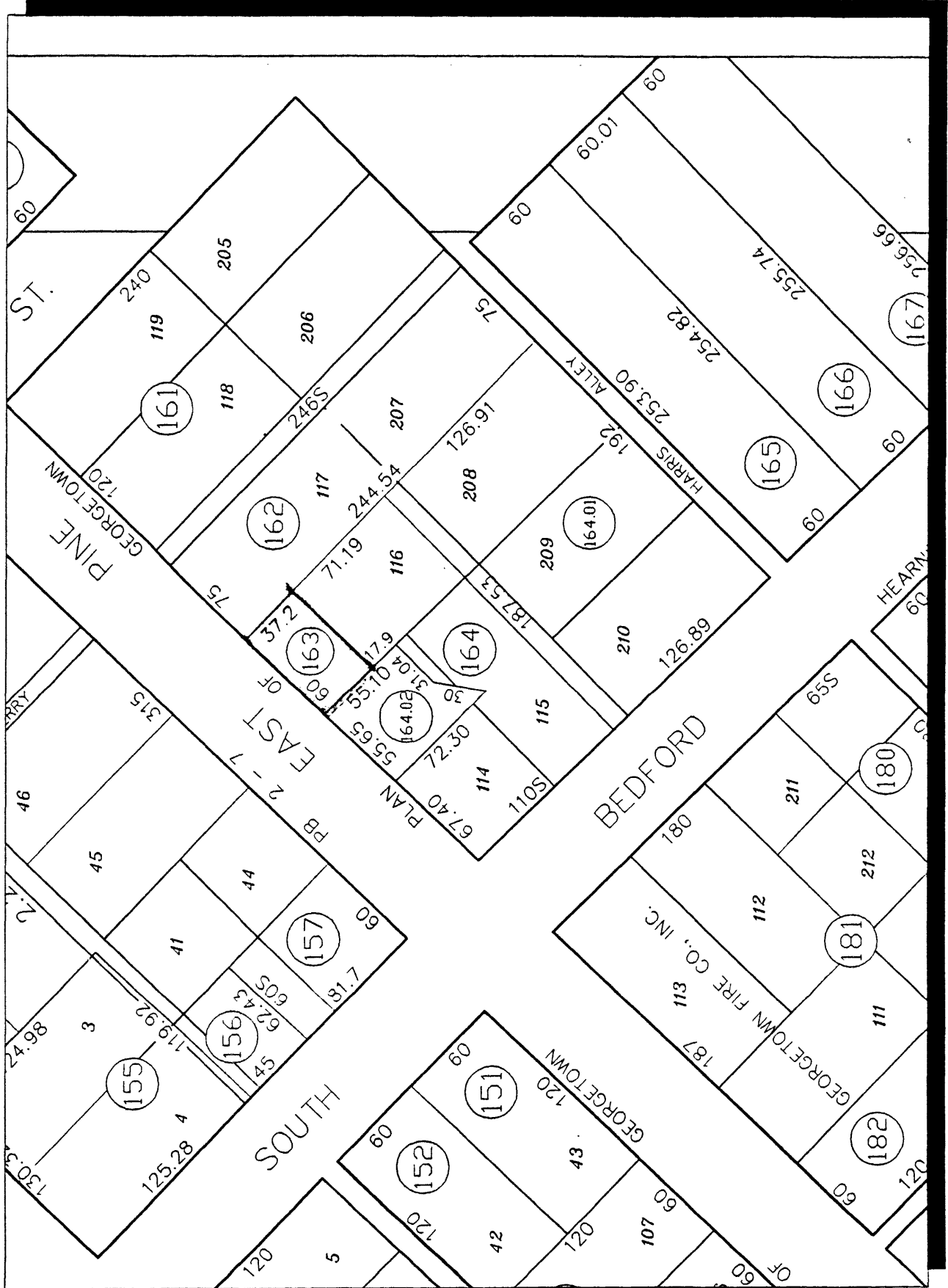
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

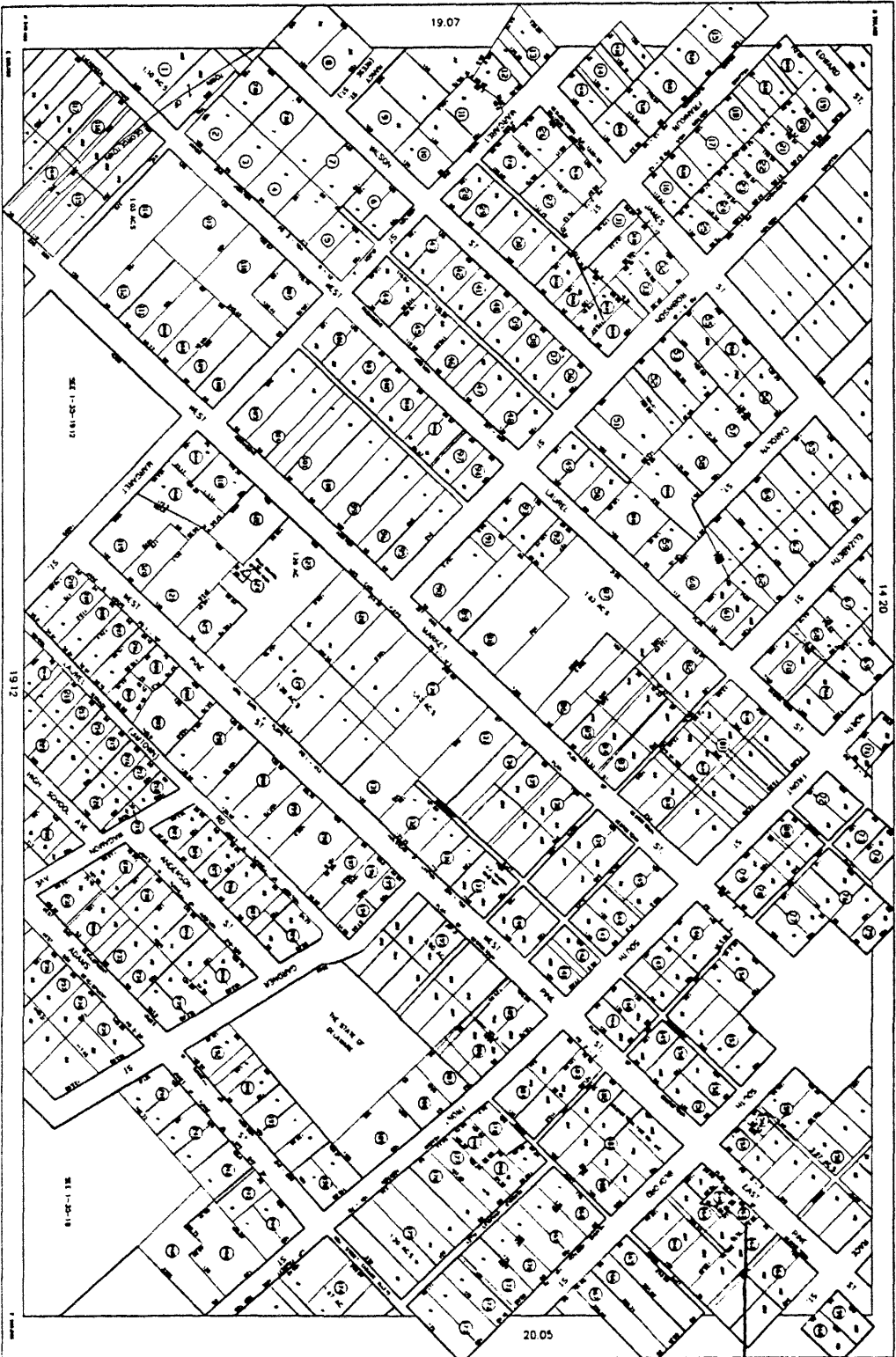


The Circle

Joseph T. Aba  
 House  
 1A E. Pine St  
 Georgetown,  
 Delaware

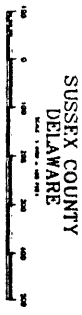
Joseph T. Adams House  
12 East Pine Street  
Georgetown, Georgetown Hundred  
Sussex County, Delaware





DATE OF REVISION: 3-2-1907  
 SHEET LAYOUT MADE ON THE STRAIGHT  
 STATE PLANNING COMMISSION SYSTEM

THE DELAWARE STATE PLANNING COMMISSION  
 HAS APPROVED THIS MAP FOR THE  
 PURPOSES OF THE PLANNING ACT



SUSSEX COUNTY  
 DELAWARE

LEGEND

(Symbol)	Lot
(Symbol)	Block
(Symbol)	Street
(Symbol)	Water
(Symbol)	Other

MAP: 1-35-19 08

Joseph T. Alarsh  
 12 E. Pine St.  
 Georgetown,  
 Georgetown  
 Hundred,  
 Sussex County  
 Delaware